*"A Transforming Flame"*

*To Eleanor:*

*Whose*
*Soul*
*Was*
*And*
*Is*
*A*
*Living*
*Flame*
*Of*
*Christ's*
*Eternal*
*Light*
*And*
*Love.*

*Joyce*

*A Witness To Suffering*

*When*
*A Life*
*Gives Witness*
*To*
*Suffering,*
*It*
*Is*
*Transformed*
*Into*
*A*
*Vessel*
*Of*
*Truth.*

*Joyce*

***MyRefuge***

***When***
***I feel***
***That my sufferings***
***Are more***
***Than I can bear—***
***I takr***
***Refuge***
***In Christ—***
***Dwelling in the depths of my soul—***
***And speak to Him***
***In profound silence.***

*Yearning*

*My soul*
*Yearns*
*To be*
*Like a dewdrop*
*Absorbed*
*In the*
*Ocean*
*Of His*
*Light and love.*

*Joyce*

*Drinking*

*There comes a time*
*When theonly language of the soul*
*Is silence*

*The silenbt soul*
*Tretches*
*To the infinite bounds*
*Of eternioty—*
*Downing in the sea-slendor*
*Of light*
*And love*

INNER TABER

~~*Seek and find*~~

*Christ*
*Dwells*
*In*
*The*
*Tabernacle*
*Of*
*Your*
*Soul—*
*Seek*
*And*
*Find*
*Him*
*There*
*Alone.*

*Transformation into Flame*

*As the darkness*
*Deepens around me,*
*The flame of Christ*
*Burns brighter and brighter*
*I am being transformed*
*Into all flame*
*--all is aflame—*
*Christ is all in all*
*One flame of love and mercy.*

*Endings*

*All things*
*Come to an end*
*In this vale of tears—*
*Tears dry up—*
*Pain ceases—*
*Loved ones die—*
*Friends depart—*
*Remember,*
*O my soul,*
*That in the end—*
*Only God remains:*
*In Him you live, and move*
*And have your being—*
*He fills all things*
*With His light—*
*He alone is all in all.*

*Joyce*

***The Seal***

***O***
***My***
***Soul,***
***Seal***
***Every***
***Deed***
***With***
***His***
***Mercy.***

*The Cup of Suffering*

*Christ*
*Drinks with me*
*The cup of suffering—*
*I never drink*
*It alone.*

*I pray*
*That I drink*
*The bitter cup*
*To the*
*Very last drop*
*In total*
*Submission*
*To His will—*
*And that*
*My lips*
*Do not tremble*
*In fear—*
*But*
*Repeat:*
*"THY WILL BE DONE—*
*NOT MINE!"*

**Joyce Surman**

**From:** Joyce Surman <jasurman@optimum.net>
**Sent:** Sunday, January 21, 2024 10:40 AM
**To:** 'dennis stack'
**Subject:** ...and the darkness deepens

*Dear Dennis:*

*When the darkness deepens around us,*
*And the soul tosses in its tremblings,*
*We must TRUST in His MERCY,*
*And SURRENDER to His will in all circumstances.*

*Only in eternity*
*will the soul know*
*the infinite beauty and purpose*
*of His mysterious designs.*
*Then*
*it will be revealed*
*how each piece*
*in the jig-saw puzzle*
*of our sorrowful sufferings*
*added to the mosaic of truth.*
*Until that is revealed,*
*the soul must abide in*
*FAITH and HOPE.*

*"Have I not commanded you?*

*Be strong and of good courage:*

*be not frightened,*

*neither be dismayed;*

*for the Lord your God is with you*

*My Birthday Gift*

*Dear Dennis,*

*In a few weeks I will be 80 (actually only 20) counting the leap years.*
*Please don't feel that a gift is necessary.*

*I now live in Christ*
*and Christ lives in me.*

*I desire and want nothing*
*that this earth can give.*

*Christ is all in all!*
*..and my soul*
*is filled*
*with joy!*

*Please kneel*
*in the silent sanctuary*
*of your soul*
*and pray that*
*the sword of suffering*
*not crush me*
*and that*
*I have the strength*
*to drink the cup of bitterness*
*to the very last drop*
*in accord with His will*
*and that*
*Our Blessed Mother*
*Pour her courage,*
*As she stood*
*Beneath the cross,*
*Into the*
*Cup of my heart.*

*I cherish your presence and the graces of your friendship.*
*Joyce*

*The Golden Thread of Suffering*

*Per our conversation yesterday that you do not want to be a "burden" to others when your time of suffering comes:*

*In the suffering soul,*
*Christ is visibly present—more so than at any other time.*
*Therefore, the suffering soul is not a "burden" to others but is a chalice of His unfathomable light and mercy.*

*A transformation occurs in one's soul when,*
*with the eyes of faith, suffering is revealed as a magnificent gift.*
*Then the "burden" is no longer a "burden"*
*but a grace-filled golden thread*
*that weaves its way through the pathways of our sorrows,*
*transforming fears to trust and tears to joys.*

*My Jesus,*
*Support me*
*When difficult and stormy days come,*
*Days of testing, days of ordeal,*
*When suffering and fatigue begin to oppress my body and soul.*
*Sustain me, Jesus, and give me strength to bear suffering,*

***Eleanor:***
***The Splendor of Christ's Light***

***The Smile in My Soul***

***Thank you***
***For the melody***
***Of light and love***
***That you smile***
***In my soul***
***Each day.***

***Joyce+***

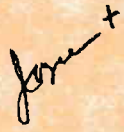
*Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;*
*The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;*
*When other helpers fail and comforts flee,*
*Help of the helpless, on, abide with me.*

*Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;*
*Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;*
*Change and decay in all around I see—*
*O Thou who changest not, abide with me.*

*Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;*
*Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;*
*Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;*
*In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.*

**Dear Eleanor:**

***Thank you for gracing my New Year***
***With the infinity***
***Of your merciful soul.***
***By the splendor of His light,***
***You humbly lead my soul forth,***
***Through the mysterious portal***
***Of His suffering:***
***Into the heart***
***Of hope and love.***

**Joyce** 

**Note: If thirty dollars does not cover the cost of the kielbasa/pirogi, please let me know.**

## *Eleanor Reuther: A Soul Enflamed*

*Her soul*
*Flowers*
*To the beauty*
*Of perfection*
*In love.*

**Each morning when her gentle knock signals her arrival, I recall the scriptural invitation, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (Rev. 3:20) And thus she enters, an ineffable radiance of light, transfiguring my world by the response of a will wholly given to God.**

**In the profound simplicity of her humility, her "gift" of presence has allowed me to see that whatever cross one carries, it is the cross that makes the world transparent for God. The heavier the cross the more the light of Christ shines through the darkness making it bright.**

**I have observed when Eleanor gives me her arm to hold as we walk, that she bends and bows in helping me carry my cross. It is in this bowing and bending that she spiritually forms the horizontal line, the humbling line of the cross. Thus I, whom "she carries", form the vertical line as she "carries" me, figuratively, on her shoulders. It is a gesture of the utmost humility. It is the cross of Christ piercing the reality of pain and suffering, lifting our souls upwards and beyond the prison of mortality.**

**Over the course of the last year, when the precariousness of my health presented unexpected challenges, I started to keep a list of Eleanor's countless ways of emptying herself for another. The more it seemed she "emptied" herself of her own will; the more she was filled to a fullness of gentle joy, her soul more and more immersed in the abyss of His grace.**

**My intention was to share with you the many acts Eleanor has done and continues to do; (from emptying the commode when I was unable to ambulate, hospital visits, doctor appointments, weekly grocery shopping--even putting the items away--, washing my clothes, cooking, taking out the garbage). When I thank her and express my gratitude, her humble response is "It's nothing!"**

**Instead of listing the innumerable acts Eleanor has so selflessly performed, a scriptural paraphrase suffices: "But there are also many other things which Eleanor (sic) did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." (John 21:25)**

**She is an embodiment of love as an imperishable and inexhaustible reality. She has become for me the arms and legs (and heart) of Christ.**
**Our parish community is blessed by her humble witness to the kenotic beauty of Christian authenticity made even more remarkable by its contrast with the pervasive, secular culture of "Self".**

**On the "pillow"**
**Of Christ's heart**
**She has led me to rest,**
**As the storms toss**
**My little, fragile boat**
**Along the seas**
**To the sunrise**
**Of eternity.**

**July 1, 2015**

**Wednesday**

**""Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go" (This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.) And after this he said to him, "Follow me."**
**John 21:18-19**

**This scripture passage echoes through the corridors of my soul during my final moments on this earth. I "do not wish to go" into the flames of suffering. He is "girding me" with strength as I "stretch out my hands" in prayer. I will accept His invitation to "follow" after Him—He will be the "lamp for my feet" and the "light" to guide me home.**

**My days are structured around prayer. Prayer is the "anchor of my soul". The daily routine is then augmented by tending to hygienic chores (hair and body cleaning), preparing meals, eating, exercising, and bowel movements! All of this depletes me of enormous amounts of energy---or, more aptly stated, depletes me of the minimal reservoirs of energy still available.**

**My upper abdomen causes unbearable discomfort. As soon as I eat—even the smallest amount—I feel bloated, swollen.**

**I pray my time on this earth's "rack" not be extended much longer. I surrender to your will, My God! ---BUT turn an ear my way and extend your hand to lead me beyond this darkness into the radiance of your light.**

**Wednesday**
**6-10-15**

***"Why are you cast down, my soul?***
***Why groan within me?"***
***"Hope in God."***
***Ps. 43***

**My soul is filled with a paralysis of anguish. "Out of the depths" of despair, I call to you, My God! Hear my prayer and deliver me from the fears that imprison my every breath.**
**Within the cloister of my own soul, I seek refuge.**
**In patient hope, My God, I wait patiently. Behind the lattices of silence, my soul shrieks.**
**Anchor my soul in your truth, beyond the fascination of passing joys. But only give me the strength, the humility, the depth of love to say "yes" to your Will, moment by moment.**
**Let not hope and trust in your mercy fail me.**

**I am living in a body that is foreign to me. This mystic casket of my soul seems to be stolen from me—cell by cell. My vision is unfocused. My brain feels as if an impenetrable, thick, black fog has cloaked it and thought struggles to clear away the debris in order to find a mooring.**
**I'm becoming terrifyingly uncoordinated, awkward, slow. Ideas cannot find words to express them; my speech falters.**
**The fatigue is leaden—I sink under its weight.**
**All of this takes getting used to for me who was just a short while ago so energetic and embraced each moment with boundless joy.**
**Launch my soul from this earth soon, My God. I find no dwelling here that brings purpose to my moments or even a vestige of comfort.**

**The swelling in my abdomen is an unrelenting burden.**

**Prayer, meditation on the word of God, must be the foundation of my days. I feel called to be an embodiment of silent prayer in the noisy tumult of this world. The ears of my soul hear Him calling me to this**

**convent in my soul. "Here I am, Lord! Do with me according to your will!" Fiat!**

5/15 5/10/15 - Sun.

**I offer my suffering as a prayer**

**Suffering is the unceasing prayer that echoes throughout the universe.**

**Suffering is the most eloquent and also the most powerful prayer because in the silence of the soul each moment is sanctified.**

5/11/15 - Monday

**Today my soul has descended into the emptiness of its nakedness. All is utter darkness. The light of hope is quenched. My trembling hand reaches out to touch (what?)—nothingness. And yet...I know He is within me. He shines in the night of my soul brighter than the "noonday sun". In fact, the blackness is a mirror of his radiance, for do we not know that "he is a hidden God"?**

**Monday, June 8, 2015**

**Yeats:**

**"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold"**

**This line from Yeats' "Second Coming" has been echoing down the hollows of my soul all morning today. I feel so completely uncentered as if "all things" have fallen apart. Whatever was the "center" of my life suddenly "cannot hold".**

**It is a strange sensation of being out of focus—mentally and physically. Though I have never been in a drunken stupor, induced by excessive alcoholic consumption, I imagine what I am experiencing must bear a remarkable similitude to that state of disorientation.**

**I have, however, known the inebriation of joy upon the discovery of an idea, the image of a beauty, transcendent and ethereal, revealed to my soul in a painting, a poem, or a musical piece. It is the inebriation of the ephemeral when seen from the perspective of a spiritual precipice.**

**Such tidbits of this passing landscape are sufficient sustenance until one catapults over the edge and, falling into the abyss, confronts the entirety of one's own nothingness. The cruel brutality of that encounter cannot be described. It can only be felt by others who have known life in the abyss. Then there is no need to falter toward description. One crosses the territory over a bridge of silence, embracing the other in a terrifying clasp of recognition.**

**The ephemeral, the transitory, now I see, was the "food" that fed my hungry soul. My soul's repast is now His Will—a "fiat" of total abandonment into the arms of God. I pray that my soul be strong and not be crushed by the weight.**

**"To be made perfect in suffering."**
**(Heb 2:10)**
**"It was fitting that he, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the leader to their salvation perfect through suffering."**

**Only in the**
**Crucible of suffering**
**Is the soul**
**Made perfect.**

**Suffering**
**Is**
**The pumice stone**
**Of the soul.**

***The Transparent Soul***

***There are some people***
***Through whom I see***
***Christ Passing by***
***As if they were***
***Transparent beings.***

***Your acts of kindness,***
***In word and deed,***
***(Rays of His light***
***Emanating from your soul)***
***Testify to such***
***A shining transfiguration.***

***"Jesus is passing by"***
***And has stopped***
***At the Eboli of my soul.***
***The sacred silence***
***Of His presence,***
***Is the fertility***
***Of your Faith.***

***And when my soul***
***Leaves this earth***
***May I hear once more***
***The words of the Gospel:***
***"Jesus of Nazareth passeth by"***
***And the blind man in me***
***Shall see THEE.***

***Joyous Christmas Blessings!***

**The autumn leaves**
**Fall from the skies**
**Of my tears**
**Into heaps of fears**
**In the corner**
**Of my soul.**
**The match is**
**Prayer.**

**To Eleanor:**

**Thank you**
**For offering**
**The lips of my soul**
**A cup filled**
**With the liquor**
**Of human kindness.**

**My soul drank**
**And in drinking**
**Has been made drunk**
**With GRATITUDE.**

**Joyce**

*"The Gift of a Feather from the Wing of My Soul"*

***In the swan song***
***Of my life,***
***God is giving me***
***The grace,***

***To pluck***
***A feather,***
***From the wing***
***Of my soul,***

***To graft it***
***To the plumage***
***Of his sorrow,***

***As a farewell gift***
***To a forlorn soul***
***Bowed down with grief,***

***To strengthen***
***The drooping wings***
***Of a soul that lies***
***In the dust***
***Of sin.***

***The gift***
***Of a little feather--***
***A "flutter" of grace--***
***Soaring into the skies***
***Over the churning seas***
***Of a soul's dark night.***

***A benedictus presence***
***In the eternal Mass***
***Celebrated on the altar***
***Of my soul.***

*"Thank you"*
*Is a little thread*

*Unravelling*

*From the hem*
*Of my soul*

*Threaded*
*Through the*
*Needle of God.*

*Joyce+*

**Do you know**
**The little girl**
**Crouching**
**In my soul?**
**"I am**
**'Faithed Fear'**
**Knee bent**
**In palsied prayer."**

**++++**

**Thank you**
**Is a little thread**
**Unravelling**
**From the hem**
**Of my soul**
**Threaded**
**Through the**
**Needle of God.**

*To Officer, Dennis:*

*May you see in each person you help,*
*the presence of Christ,*

*And may each person you help,*
*see in you*
*the face of Christ.*

*In this way*
*the light of Christ*
*will shine*
*throughout the entire world*
*Filling it*
*with the*
*splendors of His love.*

*Congratulations!*

*Joyce*

*In Re:*
*Candidate for Marlboro Police Department/*
*Character Evaluation*

*Dennis Stack:*
*A Young Man of Exemplary Virtues*

*I am an elderly lady, a retired teacher, who is homebound as the result of Parkinson's Disease. I was blessed to meet a young man several years ago who has enriched my life immeasurably by the exemplary virtues he possesses.*

*The virtue of compassion*
*The virtue of concern*
*The virtue of commitment*
*The virtue of courage*
*The virtue of fortitude*
*The virtue of integrity*
*The virtue of kindness*
*The virtue of nobility*
*The virtue of goodness*
*The virtue of selflessness*
*The virtue of humility*

*With a knock at my door, he will gently inquire with a warm smile and cheerful hello:*

*"Is there anything that you need?"*
*"Can I help you with anything today?"*
*"Call me if you need help!"*

*To know that this young man is so graciously willing to assist me has made me feel confident that I am not alone.*

*As a member of the Marlboro Police Department, Dennis would, I am confident, contribute to making this department serve the needs of the community in an exceptional and extraordinary capacity.*

*Sincerely,*

*Joyce Surman*
*25 Winthrop Drive*
*Manalapan, NJ 07726*
*7324465215*
*jasurman@optonline.net*

*A*
*Few*
*More*
*Drops*
*From*
*The*
*Chalice*
*And*
*My*
*Soul*
*Will*
*Be*
*In*
*Eternity.*

*The*
*Will of God*
*is*
*the*
*food*
*of*
*my*
*soul.*

*Suffering*
*Is*
*The*
*Measure*
*Of*
*God's*
*Love*
*For*
*A*
*Soul.*

*Sorrow*
*Will*
*Not*
*Dwell*
*In*
*A*
*Soul*
*That*
*Loves*
*The*
*Will of God.*

*Silence*
*Is*
*A*
*Ceaseless*
*Prayer:*
*Especially*
*The*
*Silence*
*Of*
*Suffering.*

*The*
*Quintessence*
*Of*
*Love*
*Is*
*Sacrifice*
*And suffering.*

*Oh lonely, wandering soul,*
*Caught in the labyrinthine prisons*
*Of this transient world,*
*Take the road that leads within,*
*There scale the mountains*
*That lead to him,*
*There rest in the verdant valleys,*
*Fragrant with the greening of hope,*
*There hear the ethereal music of boundless joy.*
*Find your rest in the*
*Luminous beauty of Christ's*
*Refulgent light.*

++++

*And so time moves on,*
*Years to months,*
*Months to weeks,*
*Weeks to days,*
*Days to minutes,*
*Minutes to seconds,*
*Joys to sorrows...*
*All is swept into the dustbin of time.*

+++

*My soul,*
*Live to die in Him,*
*And*
*Die to live in Him.*

+++

*My soul,*
*Take the road*
*That leads to Him...*
*The road within.*

+++

*Oh, living flame of love,*
*Jesus Crucified,*
*Have mercy on me! (3x's)*

+++

*My seeking soul,*
*True and lasting joy,*
*In this world of passing vanities,*
*Is found within.*

+++

*I soar*
*Through*
*The sky of my soul...*
*On His wings!*

*When*
*The soul*
*Is in the*
*Agony of Gethsemene,*
*Prayer*
*And*
*Silence*
*Are its*
*Ascendancy.*

*Dear Iryna:*

*In the Silence*
*Of My soul*
*Gushed forth*
*A fountain of joy*
*When the*
*My eyes*
*Beheld*
*The radiant, sweet beauty*
*Of*
*Evelina!*

*Thank you*
*for the*
*gift*
*of this*
*moment*
*of*
*grace!*

*I will treasure these pictures*
*tucking her into my soul*
*in heartfelt prayer.*

*A joyous Easter to you and your loved ones!*

*Tenderly in the mercy of Christ,*

*Joyce*

*PS. I am almost 80 years old and have never seen a baby of such radiant, sweet beauty as Evelina! I pray that the light of Christ shine on her path as she journeys through the years ahead.*

*I*
*Have*
*Found*
*A*
*Fountain of joy*
*In*
*My*
*Soul—*
*CHRIST!*

*Dear Iryna:*

*In the Silence*
*Of My soul*
*Gushed forth*
*A fountain of joy*
*When the*
*My eyes*
*Beheld*
*The radiant, sweet beauty*
*Of*
*Evelina!*

*Thank you*
*for the*
*gift*
*of this*
*moment*
*of*
*grace!*

*I will treasure these pictures*
*tucking her into my soul*
*in heartfelt prayer.*

*A joyous Easter to you and your loved ones!*

*Tenderly in the mercy of Christ,*

*Joyce*

*Oh, Living flame of Divine Love,*
*Jesus Crucified,*
*Have mercy on me!*

*(Light in my darkness)*

*To Eleanor:*
*A "Chosen Soul"*

*"Chosen souls are,*
*In My hand,*
*Lights*
*Which I cast*
*Into The Darkness*
*Of The world*
*And with which*
*I*
*Illumine it.*

*As stars illumine the night,*
*So chosen souls*
*Illumine the earth.*

*And the more perfect a soul is,*
*The stronger and the more far-reaching*
*Is the light shed by it.*

*It can be hidden and unknown,*
*Even to those closest to it,*
*And yet its holiness is reflected in souls*
*even to the most distant extremities of the world.*
*(1601-Diary)*

*Birthday Blessings!*

*Joyce*

*Into*
*The*
*Flame*
*In*
*Your,*
*Soul*
*Cast*
*All*
*Your*
*Sorrows*
*And*
*Sufferings:*
*Then*
*The*
*Flame*
*Of*
*Christ*
*Will*
*Stretch*
*To*
*Infinity.*

*In*
*Every*
*Tear*
*Flames*
*Christ.*

*Christ passing by,*
*Stopped by me...*

*I met a saint*
*On the*
*Road to Calvary.*
*His name is Dennis.*
*He was a construction worker of sorts.*
*At least it seemed so at the start.*
*But then on closer look*
*The eyes of my soul*
*Saw him for what he is:*
*Christ passing by—*
*Stopping—*
*Smiling—*
*Lifting me up—*
*To face*
*With his courage and strength*
*The sorrows*
*That played*
*In the*
*Shadows of my soul...*
*And*
*By his presence,*
*Making me whole.*

*Birthday blessings*
*To*
*Dennis,*
*A living saint!*

*Joyce*

*An Act of Enfoldment*
*By Joyce Surman*

*When*
*The*
*Storms*
*Of*
*Life*
*Threaten*
*To*
*Topple*
*Your*
*Little*
*Boat.*
*Gently*
*Enfold*
*Your*
*Soul*
*In*
*The*
*Will*
*Of*
*God*
*Sailing*
*On*
*In*
*Quiet*
*And*
*Trust.*

*To Dennis III and Dennis IV:*

*Your presence*
*Graces my life*
*With His beauty*
*And His strength.*

*May, I,*
*Through*
*the prayers*
*That arise*
*In the*
*still center*
*of my soul,*
*Companion*
*Your journey*
*through life,*
*With*
*ceaseless hope,*
*In His mercy*
*And in*
*His love.*

*I promise*
*My prayers*
*will flood*
*into your soul*
*even from*
*the precipice of eternity.*

*Thank you.*

*Joyce*

*Dearest Elizabeth:*

*"Thank you"*

*Is a little thread*
*Unravelling*

*From the hem*
*Of my soul*

*Threaded*
*Through the*
*Needle of God.*

*A scarlet stitch*
*To patch*
*A wounded chord*
*Of His love.*

*Joyce+*

*To Eleanor and Dan:*

*The Vase of My Soul*

*My soul*
*Has become*
*A vase*
*In which*
*Your flowers*
*Of*
*Light and love*
*Bloom into His radiance*
*Making*
*My tears*
*Into*
*Living prayers.*

*Easter Blessings!*

*Joyce* Joyce

Dear Deacon Jim:

*To live*
*A life of prayer*
*In the*
*Still point of the soul,*
*In silence,*
*In stillness,*
*In solitude,*
*Is a*
*Fountain of graces*
*Manifold.*

*Prayer*
*is*
*Hope—*
*The bud*
*On the*
*Bloom*
*Of eternity.*

I wish to express my gratitude for gracing my soul in this ministry of prayer.

Christmas blessings,

Joyce surman

May 30, 2016

This morning my soul is filled with joy. Though the extreme suffering has intensified, His radiant light is shining with a brilliance that transforms the darkness into flames of love. On the tablet of my soul, He has written a script that invites me to be, now and in eternity, His "Pilgrim of Tears".

Wherever on this earth there is suffering and tears of sorrow, my soul will collect them in a chalice. When the "I thirst" resounds throughout the universe from His throne of suffering, my soul will lift the tear-filled chalice to quench His thirst. In drinking of the tear-filled chalice, His truth will transform the tears into flames of light and love.

My soul, by assuming this role of "Pilgrim of Tears", will help transform this "vale of tears" into a conflagration of light and love.

*Dear Harry,*

*May*
*the revelation*
*Of the*
*Eternal Light—*
*The Spark of Christ—*
*Be*
*Ceaselessly renewed*
*In the*
*Hidden*
*Depths*
*Of*
*Your soul.*

*God bless you!*

*Joyce*

*To Dennis Stack and Family:*

*"The Open Hands of Christ"*

*"The cross is the most profound*
*bowing down of the divinity toward man...*
*The cross is like the touch of eternal love*
*On the most painful wounds of humanity's earthly existence.*

*Dear friends, you who are sick,*
*Who are marked by suffering in body or soul,*
*You are most closely united to the cross of Christ,*
*And at the same time, you are the most eloquent witness*
*of God's mercy.*

*Through you and through your suffering,*
*He bows down towards humanity with love.*
*You who say in silence:*
*'Jesus, I trust in you'*
*teach us that there is no faith more profound*
*no hope more alive, and no love more ardent*
*than the faith, hope, and love of a person*
*who in the midst of suffering*
*places himself securely in God's hands.*

*May the human hands*
*of those who care for you*
*in the name of mercy*
*be an extension of the open hands of Christ."*

*Saint John Paul II*

*As I follow in the footsteps of Christ*
*into the mystery of His infinity,*
*I pause momentarily*
*to thank you for being for me*
*"an extension of the open hands of Christ".*

*Joyce*

An Oblation to Perpetual Mercy: A testimony of HOPE

My soul is called to a perpetual oblation to mercy. As I am unable to do this by deed or word, my soul will become a living prayer. To counter the encircling darkness of this world, my soul is called to live in union with God by perpetual, continuous acts of Mercy: "Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me!" The "me" is a universal acclamation and appeal for all animate and inanimate creatures.

In the silence, stillness and solitude of my soul, this plea for universal mercy will be a perpetual grace on this darkened world.

*How to Produce Much Fruit*

*I testify how sweet it is to love,*
*Even in suffering,*
*And I shall say ABOVE ALL in suffering;*
*For suffering is an unsurpassed school*
*Of true love…*
*It is the living language of love,*
*And the great teacher of humankind.*
*One learns to love,*
*And one does not really love*
*Except in and by suffering,*
*For the suffering instructs us,*
*Not through human delights,*
*But through the stripping away*
*And the renouncing of self*
*On the cross.*

*A heart*
*Upon which pain*
*Has not imprinted its bleeding wounds*
*Cannot freely breathe*
*The life-giving and sanctifying air*
*Of the summits and of heaven.*
*All ascent*
*Feeds upon suffering*
*That has been passed.*
*To ascend*
*Is to pass through and pass beyond*
*Without ceasing…*

*It is to give all*
*And sacrifice all*
*For God*
*Through love.*

*-Venerable Marthe Robin*

*"Things were in God's plan*
*Which I had not planned at all.*
*I am coming to the living faith*
*And conviction that—*
*From God's point of view—*
*There is no chance*
*and that the whole of my life,*
*Down to every detail,*
*Has been mapped out*
*In God's divine providence*
*And makes complete*
*And perfect sense*
*In God's all-seeing eyes."*

*-St. Benedicta of the Cross*

*"My soul was bound to the divine will,*
*And I was truly established and fixed forever*
*in the will of God.*
*It seemed to me that I should never again*
*have to be separated*
*from this will of God.*
*And I came to myself with these precise words:*
*Nothing will be able to separate me*
*from the will of God,*
*neither anxieties, nor sorrows, nor toil,*
*nor contempt, not temptation,*
*nor creatures, nor demons,*
*nor darkness,*
*not even death itself,*
*Because, in life and in death,*
*I want all, and in all things,*
*the will of God."*

*St. Veronica Giuliani*

*"If we would*
*completely rejoice*
*the heart of God,*
*Let us strive*
*in all things*
*to conform ourselves*
*to his divine will.*
*Let us not only strive*
*to conform ourselves,*
*but also to unite ourselves*
*to whatever disposition*
*God makes of us."*
*St. Alphonsus Liguori*

*"Thou makest*
*crosses*
*soft and light,*
*And*
*death itself*
*seems*
*sweet and bright;*
*No cross nor fear*
*that soul dismays,*
*Whose will to thee*
*united stays."*

*Hymn, St. Alphonsus Luguori*

*September 14, 2019*

*Today marks the 12th year since my dear mother's embrace by the loving arms of Christ. As I watched, from the kitchen window, the leaves falling and twirling in the back yard, I felt as if a piece of my soul was being carried to the earth with each one.*

*I pondered the thought that the worst cross one can have in this valley of tears is to have no cross. It is when our souls are burdened with a cross that we are closest to Christ because, only through suffering, is the soul made one with Christ. It is suffering that unites the soul with truth, with Him alone.*

*Our prayers are always answered—perhaps not always in the way we wish but always by what we need most to lead us to Him.*

*In eternity, I am confident, that all the threads of His design will be woven into a perfect beauty. And what seemed the tatters of sorrows will be transformed into brocades of marvelous splendors.*

*The Eyes of My Soul*

*As one travels*
*along the Via Dolorosa,*
*there comes a moment in time,*
*when the eyes of the soul*
*behold a reality*
*transformed by an infusion*
*of radiant, white light*
*and the abundant grace*
*of eternal Hope.*

*The soul thenceforth*
*has the strength and courage*
*to continue*
*on its pilgrim way*
*to eternity.*

*This moment of transformation*
*occurs when Simon of Cyrene helps*
*Christ carry His cross.*

*And so, too,*
*is my suffering transformed*
*by your presence and beauty of soul*
*in helping me carry my cross.*

*You give me*
*the strength and courage*
*to continue on my pilgrim way*
*even when the weight of the cross*
*crushes the "toes" of my days.*

*Thank you for being my Simon of Cyrene.*

*From the*
*ledge of eternity,*
*I promise*
*to pray for the grace*
*to be your Simon of Cyrene*
*on your way of the cross also.*

*Trusting*
*in His mercy and love,*

*Joyce*

In Re:

*"The essence of philosophy is that a man should live that his happiness shall depend as little as possible on external things".*

*EPICTETUS*

*My reflections:*

*The philosophy of stoicism is circumscribed by the concept of determinism which, of course, is contradicted by the revelations of Christ. From an historical perspective, it is noteworthy that all philosophical systems that pre-dated Christianity had these little, enticing sparks of truth that momentarily attempted to satiate man's thirst for the eternal. Epictetus and his school of stoicism is just one such example.*

*The proposition referenced by Epictetus germane to the contingencies of happiness, of course, leads one to reflect on the development of man's relationship to the external world and its relevance to his perennial pursuit of happiness.*

*It all finds resolution in the dictum that "God is within us". It is only in Christianity that we are given guidance as to how to arrive at that knowledge, the sacred presence of God within. Stoicism provides one with propositional truth, leaving one to journey into the darkness alone. It leads to a dead end.*

*We read in the mystics of Christianity, that we prepare for a life of ultimate truth and happiness by leading a life of personal renunciation of all desires—both earthly desires as well as sacred.*

*How does one prepare for total purity of desire? We are instructed to want more and more, to want less and less—other than the will of God.*
*That seems to me the least common denominator of the spiritual, contemplative journey to God.*

*Most things that impede the souls quest for happiness are not earthly things, not our earthly desires, but our misdirected heavenly desires.*
*Many find themselves deadlocked because they are still attracted to very pious external practices thar give them pleasure. The next step then is to give up the desire for spiritual pleasure. One's spiritual life should not hang on pleasure. Nothing should stand between you and God.*

*Sometimes I think we have to literally trip over God to see God beginning to shine out of our souls. The inner presence of the divine will be made manifest to you. In the most unforeseen, unpredictable way, will shine out a spark of pure divine light. That's when one's whole vision*

*will be changed. In the twinkling of an eye (as Augustine I think said) one finds one self standing in the white radiance of eternity.*

*It seems to me that this happens to most people in the moment of immense tragedy, a moment of crushing pain, when all that one has planned, hoped for and desired, al l that our weary souls have wrapped into the warp and woof of our life, suddenly STOPS. It seems then that th4e gold becomes lead; the diamonds are just so much dust. All becomes nothing except God alone. Shining out of the soul then is a single, white, radiant light which is like nothing one has ever experienced. Only when this happens can a soul enter within and find his happiness sans externals.*

*If one does not have this experience, then life is lived with a different set of equations. But if he does survive such an experience, then all the pious "nothings" upon which he built his soul's edifice STOP. It is like the fiery chariot that came to Ezekiel. Everything else nothingness.*

*Sometimes we don't know how, under the pretense of piety, we imprison our souls with earthly things. I've tried to analyze this transformative moment want what I have found is that it occurs when there is absolutely nothing left, all the clutter of our hearts is relegated to the ash heap.*

*It happens then that God seems to gtive the soul a push—a push into nothingness. Then it is that after the tragedy or moment of grace*
*everything that oriented or structured one's life, all the noise of the external world falls on "deaf ears".*

*This transcendence that is contemplation in Christ goes far beyond the movement suggested by Epictetus. The light of the Gospel leads to the mystery of the Cross. It is in the mystery of the darkness of the cross that the external world is made void.*

*That is the moment of nada, nada, nada. One sees the toys of toys to which the soul has clung and then THERE IS THE PURE WHITE LIGHT : God is waiting for the soul at the end of the dark valley, on the other shore.*
*Epictetus, and his band of stoics, are still in some mysterious way journeying through the dark valley not yet having arrived at the other shore. I say it is still a journey en route because the mystery of the cross*
*is absent from the stoic prescription. Without surrendering to the cross, there is no hope of happiness, here or there.*

When the soul desires
Less and less,
Of earthly and spiritual things,
It then desires only one thing:
The will of God.
When it desires only the will of God,
The soul knows the peace of Christ.
It sees then
A spark of pure divine light,
The white radiance of eternity.
God has given the soul a push—
A mystical push—
Into nothingness.
Only in that nothingness,
Can the soul then see God.

*I AM HE!*

*When I see you,*
*My soul sings a melody:*

*"Here Is Christ!"*

*Happy Birthday!*

*Joyce*

*To Dr. Davis and family:*

*The sufferings*
*Of this earthly life*
*Smooth*
*The edges*
*Of a soul*
*And*
*In time*
*In the fullness of eternity*
*The*
*White*
*Radiance of*
*Christ's*
*Luminosity*
*Shines forth.*
*Into a becoming of*
*the inner beauty*
*dwelling in a soul.*

*I pray that*
*the darkness of this moment*
*be transformed by His presence*
*in the transcendent eternity*
*of His light and love.*

*In sympathy,*

*Joyce Surman*

*To Paul:*
*My Friend in Christ*

*May*
*The*
*Light*
*Of*
*Christ's*
*Truth*
*Be*
*Your*
*soul's*
*Lamp*
*In*
*This*
*Valley*
*Of*
*tears.*

*Love and blessings!*

*Joyce*

*(This was back ordered*
*But was sent now!)*

May 27 2020

My soul is in the throes of violent tempests. To surrender to His will, joyfully and unconditionally, dictates peace. How difficult it is, my dear God, to accept my weaknesses and physical decline. I try to focus, to accomplish even a small task, and my strength dissipates. The swelling in my upper abdomen saps me of all energy. This discomfort colors the texture of each passing moment. I tell myself that it will pass, but yet I know it will not. Christ help me to cling to the cross and let the light radiantly illuminate my path to eternity.

September 13, 2020

It is the anniversary of mama's passing tomorrow. Can it really be 13 years ago that she was called home to God? A shadow of a sorrow haunts that memory..but it remains but a shadow. Quickly it dissolves when in the eye of my soul I see Christ's light flame forth in and through all things. In the intensity of His light, mama's soul is enwrapped and I know all will be well—now and forever more.

*The Eyes of My Soul*

*As one travels*
*along the Via Dolorosa,*
*there comes a moment in time,*
*when the eyes of the soul*
*behold a reality*
*transformed by an infusion*
*of radiant, white light*
*and the abundant grace*
*of eternal Hope.*

*The soul thenceforth*
*has the strength and courage*
*to continue*
*on its pilgrim way*
*to eternity.*

*This moment of transformation*
*occurs when Simon of Cyrene helps*
*Christ carry His cross.*

*And so, too,*
*is my suffering transformed*
*by your presence and beauty of soul*
*in helping me carry my cross.*

*You give me*
*the strength and courage*
*to continue on my pilgrim way*
*even when the weight of the cross*
*crushes the "toes" of my days.*

*Thank you for being my Simon of Cyrene.*

*From the*
*ledge of eternity,*
*I promise*
*to pray for the grace*
*to be your Simon of Cyrene*
*on your way of the cross also.*

*Trusting*
*in His mercy and love,*

*Joyce*

6/6/11 +

W Kisting –

*To my neighbors, Nalief and Masoon:*

# *Tears of Light*

***Your kindness***
***Waters the flowers in***
***The garden of my soul***
***With crystal tears of glistening light--***
***In a gesture of humble gratitude,***
***Please accept this little musical watering vase***
***--When it's tilted,***
***It chimes a melody---***
***I pray it waters the flowers***
***In the garden of your soul***
***Making bouquets of fragrant***

# *"Thank you's"!*

***Your neighbor friend,***
***Joyce***

**(I feel so undeserving of your overtures of kindness.**
**I pray for forgiveness.**
**Have I spelled your name correctly, Nalief?**
**I didn't have a pencil at the moment we spoke on the phone.)**

***The Living Flame in the Soul***

**There is a living flame of love**
**--A Divine Spark—**
**Burning in your soul.**
**Surrender your cares to Him—**
**For He is a consuming fire.**

① 6/6/11

**One day the thought enters the mind that it does not matter to anyone on this earth whether you live or die. I mean really matters other than the cursory, senseless refutation that it does matter. Such remarks are nothing but meaningless retorts that fall into the bin of what is expected of one to utter in response. It really does not matter. That is the truth.**

**The next level is when the mind realizes that it does not matter if it does not matter to anyone on this earth whether you live or die. In other words, what difference does it make if anyone on this earth really cares if I live or die?**

**There is peace in that realization. There is even, dare I say, joy. One finally reaches a state of total surrender. The struggle is over. Each day is what it is. All expectations, hopes, as well as fears and worries reach quiescence—a deep stillness within the soul.**

**This surrender to the stillness within the soul is perfect peace. Thoughts cease; one IS!**

my

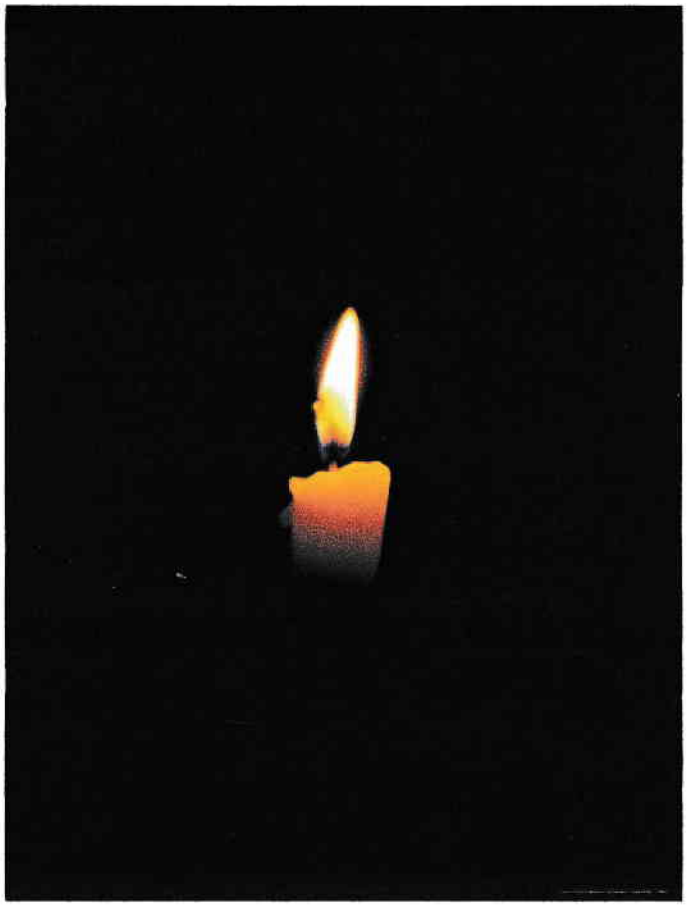
# Book

# *Wisdom for the Soul's Journey to God*

## *Vol I*

*Selections for meditation*

# *Flame in My Soul*



*Joyce Ann Surman*

***"Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden,***
***And I will give you rest.***
***Take my yoke upon you,***
***And learn from me,***
***For I am gentle***
***And meek of heart,***
***And you will find rest for your souls.***
***For my yoke is easy,***
***And my burden is light."***
***(Matthew 11:28-30)***

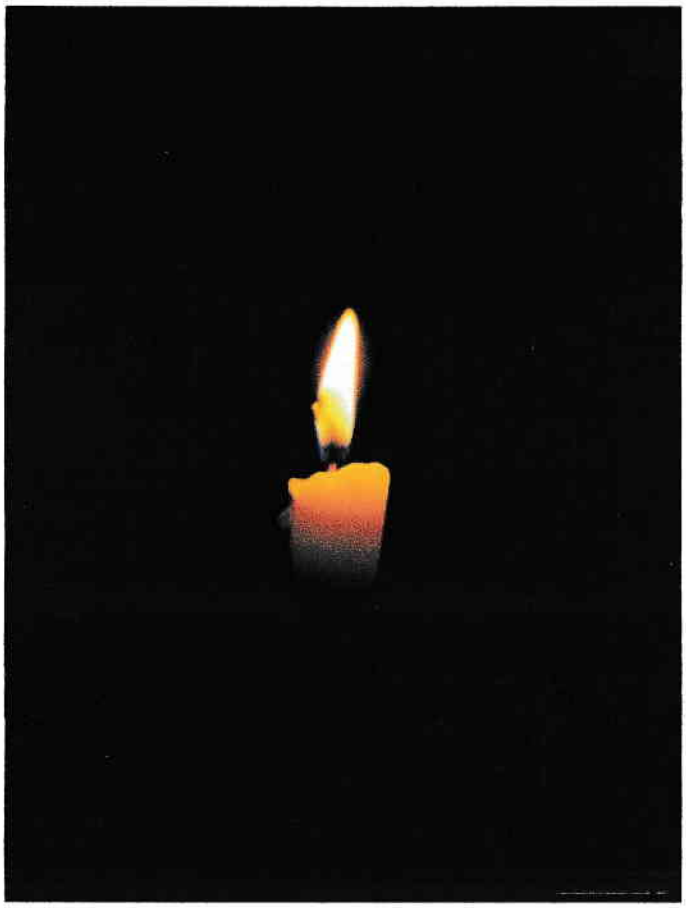
***August 1, 2010*** **- An Abiding Peace**

**After these last several weeks of intense spiritual torment, my soul now has come to know that this inner anguish is evidence of God fervently searching for my soul in order to make it cleave to Him totally. The only thing necessary is for my soul, in simplicity and total resignation, to let itself fall into the arms of this loving God. He is a God who seeks in order to be sought. He has sought my soul amidst the tempests. My soul, in seeking Him, is like an anchorless ship that has now found its port---the port being His abiding peace.**

**Seek my faltering soul, Oh, My God!**
**So that it can be found by your seeking heart,**
**And having sought you in return,**
**Be found in the harbor of your abiding peace.**

**A Dialogue with My Soul**
**God speaks to my Soul**
**The Ears of My Soul Hear what God speaks**
**A Dialogue Between God and My Soul**
**He Speaks to My Soul**
**The Listening Soul**
**Listening in the Silence**
**The Silence of the Soul**
**In the Silence of the Soul**
**He Speaks in the Silence**
**Out of the Silence**
**In the Stillness of God**
**In His Stillness**
**In His Silence**
**The Word in the Silence**

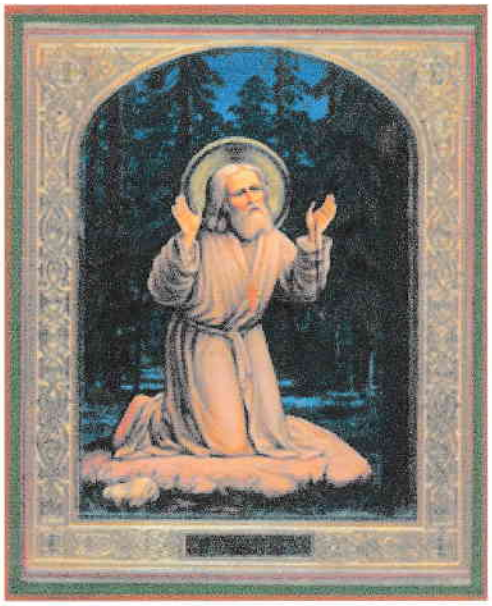
# *Hesychia:*
# *A Theology of Tranquility*



***Monastic wisdom on living a life***
***Of solitude, silence, stillness***

**Joyce A. Surman**

# *Hesychia:*
# *Inner Silence of the Soul*



## *Meditations on Solitude, Silence, Stillness*

Compiled ***~~Edited~~ By***

***Joyce A. Surman,***

***Hesychast***

**Title:**
**Hesychia:**
**Solitude, silence, stillness**
**The Path to Inner Peace**

**Intro.**
**So now, for us, in our day and age, what can we learn from the way of Hesychia, from this path to inner peace? Today's world, more than ever, is full of noise, entertainment, and seemingly endless distractions which, although they may not bring any acute, immediate harm, deaden the soul little by little. ...this state comes to be accepted as the norm. We need to be concentrated within ,but these things disperse us outside ourselves**

**Inner peace and stillness that is most needful for us today. ...we live in a world that is generally high-paced and permeated with constant noise.**

**"Be still and know that I am God"**

**"The kingdom of God is within you."**

**"Return to thy rest, O my Soul"**

**"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."**

*At the Doorstep of God*
*(a humble note of appreciation)*

*In the silent corridors of our souls*
*Where tears and sorrows,*
*Sufferings and joys,*
*Hopes and fears*
*Dwell in the mysterious graces of His will,*
*The sound of your supernal chants each Sunday*
*Seems to rise from the abyss of God's abode*
*To the frontiers of transcendent truth*
*Bathing our souls in the rainfalls*
*Of His unclouded love and sanctifying grace.*

*Like a pillar glowing in the darknesses of night*
*Your soul, song-filled with hope,*
*Transfigures our emptinesses*
*Into the radiances of joy and faith .*
*Bending our knees in prayer,*
*In the Eucharistic lights and the great "AMEN!"*
*We kneel, the nakedness of our souls*
*Clothed by the benediction of your song,*
*Abloom in beauty at the doorstep of God.*

*Each week, my fellow parishioners and I,*
*Fill the wildernesses of our souls*
*By sipping at the cup that flows*
*To an Overflowing fullness*
*From the well of melody*
*In the solitude of your soul.*

*Before the selfless beauty of this gift,*
*We humbly offer so little in return.*
*Let this, therefore, be a "Thank You",*
*Be it ever so poor,*
*A "Deo Gratias!" wrapped in the silences of prayer.*

*In the humility and simplicity*
*Of a grateful heart,*

Joyce

*At the Doorstep of God*
*(a humble note of appreciation)*

*In the silent corridors of our souls*
*Where tears and sorrows,*
*Sufferings and joys,*
*Hopes and fears*
*Dwell in the mysterious graces of His will,*
*The voice of your sonorous chants each Sunday*
*Seems to rise from the abyss of God's abode*
*To the frontiers of transcendent truth*
*Bathing our souls in the rainfalls*
*Of His unclouded merciful love and grace.*

*Like a pillar glowing in the darknesses of night*
*Your song-filled soul's voice*
*Transfigures our emptinesses*
*Into the radiance of joy.*
*Bending our knees in prayer,*
*In the Eucharistic lights and the great "AMEN!"*
*We kneel, the nakedness of our souls*
*Clothed by the benediction of your song,*
*At the doorstep of God.*

*Each week, my fellow parishioners and I,*
*Fill the wildernesses of our souls*
*By sipping at the cup that flows*
*From the beatific vision of your soul's song.*

*Before the selfless beauty of this gift,*
*We humbly offer so little in return.*
*Let this, therefore, be a "Thank You,*
*Be it ever so poor,*
*A "Deo Gratias!" wrapped in the silences of prayer.*

*In the humility and simplicity*
*Of a grateful heart,*

10/08

*Joyce*

**How the slightest whisper of a breath of human kindness sets my soul aflame with earthly desires! It is then that my fragile boat sinks under the weight of heavy cargo and takes on water that could so easily drown it. It is in moments such as these that I anchor my soul to the cross. It becomes my raft keeping me afloat above the torment and the raging waters that threaten to destroy me.**

**Holding the cross aloft before the eyes of my soul reveals to me that suffering is the truth that is His love. For it is in suffering, and through suffering, that the soul is purified of its dross and freed to abide in Him and Him alone. Solo dio in dio.**

**Why search beyond for meaning and happiness in anything else or anyone else? In Him is fullness. All else, as the psalmist says is "emptiness, bitterness, and pain."**

**I am returned to my stronghold, to He who abides in the center of my soul. And to whom everything within me yearns to be united. It is this all-embracing union that lifts me to the heights of joy and happiness on this earth. Nothing else on this earth could afford me a comparable bliss.**

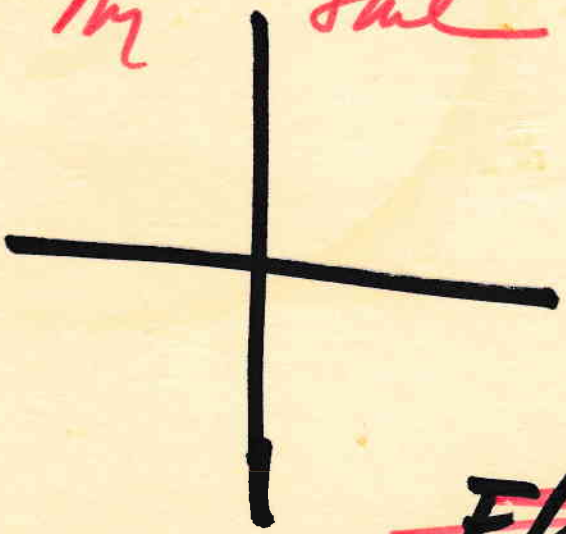
**When sorrows flood into the barren plains of my soul, I clutch the cross to my breast and I am rescued and held aloft in the emptiness of annihilation and surrender.** 10/12/08

# The Chosen Chalice CHRISTOFORI:

# Reflections of my Soul

Abid ~~with~~ IN me:

Reflections of my Soul



~~Florigelo~~ ~~Florigillo~~

*of Tribulation*
*And Is Transfigured*
*By The Light*
*Of Tabor*

Now, it was the gift He gave to my soul to "consent", to "surrender"-- to eat the "food" of God's will for both my mother and me.

In the epiphanic splendor of that moment, the crushing weight of the darkness lifted and the splendor of truth's light flooded my soul.

This was my soul's "resurrection" moment. It had crossed the Tiber of tribulation and been transfigured by the light of Tabor.

*My Soul*
*Is Now Called*
*To Make*
*A Journey*

My soul now had "a journey to make": the ears of my soul heard an incessant invitation to "Come, follow me!" Where to? To the place He had been calling my soul for many decades: To ascend the mount of perfection to union with Him in the Nothingness that is the All.

**God is mystery.**
**The most perfect manifestation of the Divine Mystery is Jesus Christ.**

**6/1/08**

**When my soul is**
**Cast down within me,**
**And all around is the**
**Bitterness of pain,**
**I see the Eucharistic lights,**
**And then He appears**
**Transfiguration in the**
**Mountain of my soul.**

*Come, O My Soul, Ascend:*
*All that you have suffered*
*has provided you with many opportunities*
*for sacrifice and renunciation.*
*Have they not been for you, My Little Child,*
*a perfect Calvary leading to the dying of self?*
*Has this constant self-immolation*
*not been your greatest blessing?*
*Have not all events in your life*
*conspired to make you realize*
*that the supernatural life,*
*a life lived for God Alone in God*
*is more real than the natural life?*
*All these afflictions are but the shadow*
*under which God is concealed.*
*Do not try to understand;*
*only submit.*
*But lift the veil, and I am there,*
*the eternal truth—*
*in the midst of the thorns.*
*Everything conceals the plenitude of God*
*for eyes that have faith to see.*
*Therefore, throw open your gates, O my soul,*
*and embrace with joyful expectancy*
*all sorrows and suffering—*
*for it is under those shadows*
*that I come to you with the kiss of love.*
*Open your gates, O My Soul,*
*and be deeply penetrated with*
*my love.*

*"This is the will of God for you,*
*Your sanctification."*
*(Thess. 4:3)*

*The Providential*
*Design*
*Of God*
*At Work*
*In My Soul*

The remarkable convergence of events surrounding my mother's death revealed to my soul the providential design of God at work in all that had happened during this period of its life, as well as the entire spectrum of its life while enclosed in this mortal tent.

**6-19-08**

**The song of my soul:**

***Ave, Crux Spes Unica***
***Fiat Voluntas Tua***
***Solo Dio in Dio***
***Fiat Lux***

**(Hail, Cross our only hope!**
**Thy will be done!**
**God alone in God**
**Let there be light!)**

***Solo Dio Chaplet*** **(Prayed on rosary beads)**

**On Crucifix: Jesus I In You!**
**Ave, Crux spes unica! (on first Our Father bead)**
**Fiat voluntas Tua (on next three Hail Mary beads)**
**Ave, Crux spes unica (on next Our Father bead)**
**Solo Dio in Dio (On center medal)**
**Fiat voluntas Tua (on Hail Mary beads)**
**Ave, Crux spes unica (on Our Father beads)**
**Ending:**
**Last three Hail Mary beads: Solo Dio in Dio**
**Last Our Father bead: Fiat Lux**
**On Crucifix: Jesus I In You!**

**I found God not in the alphabet of my mind,**
**But in the blood of His cross.**

**The nothingness that I am consumes my soul like frenzied ants devouring a rotting compost heap.**
**Only the compost heap is within me feeding the barren plains of my soul, and the ants are the ever-increasing moments of despair.**

**It is only by embracing the ants, not holding them in contempt, that my soul's ascent is not deterred.**

**All my hope is in Him alone. Only then do the eyes of my soul catch a glimpse of a divine illumination, a light flickering within it and making the veil of darkness light. If it were not for this little flicker, my soul would careen into the abyss and be swallowed entire.**

**My soul ascends to God on the barest of threads that unravel from the garment of His will. But for these threads, all on this earth would be emptiness, utter nothingness, for me. It is these barren threads that lift up my soul to the uttermost heights of His cross.**

**My soul, hanging thus from its beams, is like a moth-eaten cloth through which the wintry blasts of an impending blizzard pass without detour. A chill takes hold of my soul and it shivers.**

**All else has vanished from my soul except for Thee and Thy will for me.**

**7/2008**

**O, Light!**
**You who dwells in the depths of my soul,**
**Amidst all anxiety**
**And increasing tribulations**
**And sorrows,**
**You shine all the brighter,**
**Illuminating my way**
**Through the darkness.**
**Without You leading me onwards,**
**My soul would be lost**
**In a maze of unending despair.**

**Title:**
***One With Jesus***

***"Jesus, I in you***
***And you in me:***
***One with Jesus!"***

**7/2008**
**Death is a solitude.**

**7/2008**
**O my soul, do not cling to anything or anyone in this earthly life.**
**All comes to an end except the One who is eternal.**

***On Gazing on My Crucifix:***
***(7/16/08)***

**You stretch out**
**Into the Infinity**
**Of my emptiness**
**And I am made full.**

5/13

Writing

(2009)

***+The Port of Truth***

**When my soul tosses**
**On tempestuous seas,**
**I jump into His saving boat**
**And sail to the Port of Truth**
**And so am freed.**

***+Through a Chink in My Soul***

**My eyes can only look at this world**
**In the nakedness of its unreality**
**Through a chink in my soul.**
**In squinting to see,**
**I see but do not see.**
**This is sight enough for me.**

**Each one of us is called to lift the chalice of suffering to the lips of our souls and to drink deeply! It is a "drink" that refreshes and strengthens, nourishing hope that stretches to eternity---our "real" home.**

**Writing**

**I. Suffering is the springtime of a soul.**

**2. Suffering is the purest prayer a soul can pray. It is a silent shriek into the darkness of fear that is heard by the ears of God alone. It returns as an echo that ceaselessly resounds in the trembling caverns of a soul: *"Do not be afraid! I am with you always!"***

1. **Suffering will be the springtime of my soul. The seeds of anguish will bloom into the most fragrant bouquet in the Garden of Christ's Divine Heart of Love.**
2. **Suffering is the purest prayer my soul prays now. It is a silent shriek into the darkness of fear that only the ears of God alone hears. It returns as an echo that ceaselessly resounds in the trembling caverns, in the deeps of my soul: *"Do not be afraid! I am with you always!"***

**Writing**

1. **Suffering will be the springtime of my soul. The seeds of anguish will bloom into the most fragrant bouquet in the Garden of Christ's Divine Heart of Love.**
2. **Suffering is the purest prayer my soul prays now. It is a silent shriek into the darkness of fear that only the ears of God alone hears. It returns as an echo that ceaselessly resounds in the trembling caverns, in the deeps of my soul: *"Do not be afraid! I am with you always!"***
3. **"Perfect Love Casteth out fear"(1 John 4:18):**
   **When the boat of my soul,**
   **Fills with the waters of fear,**
   **The "perfect love" of Christ's embrace,**
   **Holds my trembling soul afloat.**

**New Year's Eve-2009**
**The hour of vespers**

**He has revealed to my soul the path that it is to walk "following after Him".**

**My little child, your soul will become a living flame of love. It is in that living flame burning within your soul that I will be in you and you in me. That is our meeting place where we will become One.**
**Sorrows will be the kindling wood for this flame burning in your soul. The purpose of suffering will be to make this flame burn with an intensity of brightness spreading out and setting aflame the darknesses of this world. The suffering of which I speak as kindling twigs for this consummation within your soul will be the world's suffering.**

**Each time a tear is wept someplace in this world, the fire within your soul will leap up and shoot forth embers to spread my light further and further abroad.**

**This is the path the footsteps of your soul must follow for the remainder of your years on this earth. Now you know why, my little child, I have destined you to walk amidst the heaps of so many sorrows in your life. It was to transform your soul into a blazing fire of my love. Your soul will shoot forth embers that will be sparks putting light where there is now only darkness.**

**Now your sorrow is transformed into perfect joy and true peace by the alchemy of my love for you.**

***My Dear Jesus living in the abode of my soul, what you tell me makes the flame in my soul instantaneously shoot forth sparks that alight I know not where. Tell me how is my soul to accomplish what you say it is to do?***

**My little child, do you not know that it is with wordless prayer in the silence of your soul that all remedy for this world's ills dwells? When you turn to me, the flame that burns continuously in your soul, in silence and solitude, together, united as one, we will pour forth a transcendent luminosity of light. This shooting forth will shower the entire globe with the light of hope, and faith and love.**

***Why, my dear Jesus, have you chosen my soul for the radiance of this flame?***

**Because, my little child, it is your soul that has been prepared from its incarnation in flesh, to know suffering and, therefore, to be prepared to lessen suffering by the consuming fire of my love. Were you not branded with my cross from the moment of your birth? From the very first moment of your birth, I chose you to be the consuming fire of my love. By this mystical consummation, souls will be set afire. The world, soul by soul, will be transformed.**

**Now, your tears, my little child, will not fall to the ground spent. The grief in your soul will be, from this moment forth, the kindling wood for my living flame in your soul to burn with more and more intensity. I am the living flame of love in the deep-most center of your soul. I am your companion on the way to eternity.**

**My little child, from now on when you gaze at your crucifix, you will see not only my body crucified for love but also a mirror image of the flames shooting forth from your soul. You will see the consuming conflagration that perpetually burns in your soul. This image will never diminish but only grow more and more intense until all that the eyes of your soul will see on this earth is the flames shooting forth and the embers catching fire in other souls.**

**In my Divine Providence suffering has existed so that love could be born. I have waited a long time for the birth of love from the womb of suffering. From your childless womb will be born many children, my little child. You will now see with the eyes of your soul the darknesses of other souls that you meet. Seeing, your soul will shoot forth an ember and setting a little spark in the soul of the other. This soul will then become the child of your soul.**

**From now on your soul will be the mystical bridge over which the embers of my consuming fire will travel. It will be the bridge not only on this earth but in eternity as well. When your soul is taken up, freed from its mortal imprisonment in flesh, it will still be my bridge to souls on earth.**

**Every time there is a tear shed, a sorrow felt, a trial, a tribulation, a fear, a shuddering unto despair, the embers from your soul will be let loosed and flood the soul that calls out to you in the silence of an interior gaze. In the mysticism of this silent gaze, your soul will blaze forth embers of love, and hope, and faith. Your soul will shower the world of darkness with my light.**

**The purpose of suffering, my little child, is to call forth this shower of love. Know that in eternity all is a blaze of light. You now, my little child, while still on earth, will know that abiding light---the living flame of my love.**

***What joy my soul experienced upon hearing these words! It now found its purpose on this earth and its mission in heaven. My suffering and sorrows have found their purpose. In the silence and solitude of my soul, by the interior gaze on the one who dwells at the deep-most center of my soul, I will go forth into the world. In this way I will be in the world but not of it.***

***I am to remain here---in the cloister of my rooms, then, My Dear Jesus?***

**Yes, my little child, you are to remain in the cloister of your soul. If you traveled forth, the embers, shooting forth from your soul, would soon flicker and die. The winds of the world would quench them. Only in the silence of solitude, by keeping your gaze on the living flame of love burning at the center of your soul, will the conflagration ignite allowiing the luminous radiance of my love to quench the sorrows of this suffering world.**

***Feast of the Epiphany***
***January 4, 2008***

**My Soul Aflame:**
**I feel within my soul a divine fire, a living flame. This flame burns perpetually—night and day.—ceaselessly illuminating everything. Oh, the joy! Oh, the happiness that pervades my days... accompanied by the burning fires of this flame within my soul.**

**Into this living flame in my soul, I cast all my worries, fears, anxieties, sorrows, sufferings. The living flame of His love transmutes all into His peace---the peace that He promised would "passeth all understanding."**

The Flame in my Soul:

**May 15, 2009 -Christ exists in my soul as a living flame of love. Into that flame, I toss my sorrows, my fears, and my sufferings. In that flame, all is burned up in His love.**

**May 18, 2009**

**Like a dove, my soul has taken wing and having flown, now rests in solitude. Truly, there is no rest for the weary thirsting soul that has not flown to God. And where is this solitude, this resting in God to be found? It is within you, at your deepest center of being---at the still point of your soul.**

**To search for truth is to search for God. Therefore, to search for truth is to pray for it is in prayer that we seek the face of God. And it is in prayer that He seeks our face. Prayer is this mutual seeking of the other's face in the silence and solitude of one's soul which is the mystical meeting place for the tryst.**

**To pray in accord with St. Paul's admonition "to pray unceasingly" is to constantly seek His face peering out beneath the surface of all that lives and breathes and has its being in Christ. When this ceaseless prayer takes possession of one's soul, the entire universe becomes impregnated with the divine impulse. All pulsates with His presence. All breathes with His breath. All becomes One, united in an unbroken harmony of love.**

**Every act then becomes one of total conformity to His will. When humility then takes possession of a soul and one no longer wills anything other than His will, there is a total surrendering of ego. It is in the uncompromising total surrender to the All of Christ, in will, memory, and intellect, that the soul then knows true peace and perfect joy. There is no other possibility by which our souls can travel other than this route. All paths suggested by the world are but distractions that lead our souls further and further away from the harbor for which they long.**

**One cannot know God except by faith. And faith can be found only by seeking it in the unrelentless sincerity of hope. When the soul utters the words, "I hope", it is really saying, "I have faith that such and such will occur, if it be the will of God." Without faith, the soul loses its ground of being and is divorced of its ground *for* being. It is like a ship without an anchor to which it**

**can be moored when the storms assail. Or, it is like a ship without a sea upon which to float. The sea being the ship's very ground for being.**

**The soul that truly is desirous of walking in the footsteps of Christ must not choose to walk only so far and no farther. One's will or circumstances do not dictate how one "follows me". One must tread the way of the crucifixion, weep with Him in Gethsemane, and climb with bloodied feet the mount of Golgotha, and, inevitably, be lifted up on the cross of suffering and annihilation that is Calvary. Then only will the divine light shine and the voice of Christ be heard. Then only will Christ be present, hidden and silent no longer.**

**In the obscurity of my soul, in the obscure light of faith, in the dark night of doubt, my soul has struggled to ascend the mystical Mount Carmel which lies hidden at its centermost core.**

**It is Calvary and the cross that are central to the path that my soul traverses.**

**I find enjoyment in nothing other than God. He, alone, is the happiness of my soul. In Him is the fullness of my joy.**

**When I am beset with doubts and fears, I take refuge in the silence of my soul and, kneeling before the inner tabernacle where He alone abides, I thrust all, as so much rubbish, into His all-consuming flames of love.**
**Reduced to nothing but a pile of cinders, my doubts and fears are transformed from weighty burdens into wingless sentinels of joy.**

**The soul must cultivate quiet amidst the noise the world imposes. Other souls, sensing this divine refuge of peace, will experience a mysterious attraction knowing that such a soul has ears for the softest and most imperceptible little voices spoken by other souls. Such a soul, an oasis of peace, silence and a well of quietude has ears to perceive the little voices of anguish that often lie concealed beneath the surface of a chosen word or a**

**momentary smile. Such a soul is graced with a presence to be present to the One who is really weeping beneath the veils. Such a soul "sees" and in "seeing" is made one with the pain made visible in this meeting of the eyes.**

# *A Soul Aflame:*
# *Reflections of a Carmelite*

***Volume I***

**St. John-Benedicta of the Cross, OCDS**
**(Joyce Surman)**

*March 17, 2009*

***+Surrender:***

**Fear nothing!**
**Accept everything!**
**All is God's plan.**

***+In the Gethsemane of my soul***

**+I sought for many years for Him in the Gethsemane of my soul, and after so long a time having found Him in my soul's deepest center, He who was so ardently seeking me, my soul is quite weary of worldly things. It now sits down in the splendor of truth quite content to be a tenant of the light until it is freed from its mortal tent. My soul needs no longer to seek for comfort or peace, nor search for a place to rest in any other place except where it now knows it can truly find it. And thus all my desires have been stilled in an unshakeable trust in Him.**

**Dwelling under the shadow of His truth, my soul, at last, has found its anchorhold.**

**In the imperturbability of this quiescent calm, it does seem as if my soul is engulfed and protected by a shadow of a cloud behind which He hides. Though hidden, the dew of His love showers down upon my soul bathing it in the waters of His mercy. In this rainfall, this deluge of love and mercy, my soul is freed from the weariness of earthly things. Enkindled in its deepest recesses is a flame that consumes all with its radiance and the intensity of its heat.**

**When my soul finds itself in the ineffability of this mysterious presence, it knows that nothing in this world can fulfill its desires: it has found the fulfillment of all desire and wishes to remain here and seek no other place of refuge---for there is none other that can satisfy a soul on this earth than this resting place within.**

**March 20, 2009**

***"Abandonment is a steel file,***
***And the endurance of great darkness***
***Leads to great light.***

**St. John of the Cross never fails to capture the truths of the soul's ascent. When a soul wholly abandons itself to the Divine Will in all things, without its likes or dislikes determining its course, then abandonment is a steel file. Steel is the hardest metal so it is appropriate that the metaphor refer to steel, rather than to any other metal. To cut through all that pulls the soul away from God a substance is needed that will not readily become blunt or that will too frequently need sharpening.**

**In addition, when forged into the shape of a file, the soul is armed with weaponry that has the capacity to cut through all distractions that the world uses to entice it to travel in other directions rather than to make a sheer, uncluttered path up the mountain.**

**A file does not cut with one sharp swipe as would a knife. Thus the metaphor of a file is more apt for the soul's progression. In order for a file to cut whatever lies before it, it must many times pass back and forth over the object. A certain amount of pressure or strength must be applied. The soul thus, also, reaches the perfection of abandonment, of adhering in all things to the Divine Will and not its own, of total union of the two wills, only after a period of "filing" away at whatever obstacles lie in its path upwards.**

**After the filing is complete, and the two wills are one (human and Divine), then the long years of enduring the "great darkness", i.e., the absence of Christ's light in the soul, leads to a "great light", i.e., the radiance of the living flame of love.**

**One must endure the extreme darkness in order for the soul to be led to the radiance of His light. Endurance is not a static state, rather it leads the soul to an awareness that it must no longer even hope that if it endure but for a time the darkness of the night, then it will be saved and once more be empowered to**

**navigate the rising waters that seek to drown it in the world of creaturely wants and desires.**

**No longer even hoping for rescue, the soul then no longer searches for a safety rope, but seeks, instead, to float like a little raft wherever He wishes the little raft of this soul to float. Whether it float west or east,, north or south, no longer matters to the little soul now in its state of utter abandonment to the will of God.**

**Floating thus in the Divine Will, its will totally surrendered, it now knows that happiness and peace which He promised us: the peace that passeth understanding. Clinging to nothing, the soul now has everything. It has made the ascent up the promontory of desires and now rests in the still meadows of His light.**